Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-16 canceled.

17. (new) A method for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said method comprising:

    a) establishing a direct serial connection between a firmware device and a download computing device;

    b) establishing a network connection between said download computing device, a web-based device administration utility on a web server and said firmware device;

    c) uploading firmware configuration data, over said network connection, from an existing firmware structure in said firmware device to said web server using said web-based administration utility;

    d) storing said firmware configuration data on said web server;

    e) erasing firmware, including said firmware configuration data, from said firmware device;

    f) loading a new firmware structure from said download computing device to said firmware device over said direct serial connection;

    g) loading said firmware configuration data from said web server to said firmware device over said network connection.

18. (new) A method as described in claim 17 further comprising converting said

configuration data to a format compatible with said new firmware structure using

said web-based device administration utility on said web server prior to said

loading said firmware configuration data.

19. (new) A method as described in claim 17 further comprising modifying said

configuration data with said web server prior to said loading said firmware

configuration data.

20. (new) A method as described in claim 17 further comprising querying network

elements to ascertain additional configuration data needed by said new firmware

structure.

21. (new) A method as described in claim 20 further comprising combining said

additional configuration data with said configuration data using said web-based

device administration utility on said web server prior to said loading said

firmware configuration data.

22. A system for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said
   method comprising:

  a) a firmware device;

  b) a download computing device;

  c) a web-based device administration utility on a web server;

  d) a direct serial connection between said firmware device and said download
     computing device;

  e) a network connection between said download computing device, said web-based
     device administration utility on a web server and said firmware device;

  f) an uploader for uploading firmware configuration data, over said network
     connection, from an existing firmware structure in said firmware device to said
     web server using said web-based administration utility;

  g) storage, on said web server, for storing said firmware configuration;

  h) an eraser process for erasing firmware, including said firmware configuration
     data, from said firmware device;

  i) a firmware loader for loading a new firmware structure from said download
     computing device to said firmware device over said direct serial connection;

  j) a configuration loader for loading said firmware configuration data from said web
     server to said firmware device over said network connection.

23. (new) A system as described in claim 22 further comprising a converter for

converting said configuration data to a format compatible with said new firmware

structure using said web-based device administration utility on said web server

prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.

24. (new) A system as described in claim 22 further comprising a modifier for modifying

said configuration data with said web server prior to said loading said firmware

configuration data.

25. (new) A system as described in claim 22 further comprising a query process for

querying network elements to ascertain additional configuration data needed by

said new firmware structure.

26. (new) A system as described in claim 25 further comprising a combiner for

combining said additional configuration data with said configuration data using

said web-based device administration utility on said web server prior to said

loading said firmware configuration data.